

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend claim 1, and add new claims 40-75 as indicated below.

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

LISTING OF CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) A matrix control network **[[system]]**, comprising:
a hierarchical control network, said hierarchical control network comprising a plurality of data buses and a plurality of control network nodes arranged in a hierarchical structure, each of said data buses **[[connected to]]** communicatively coupling one or more of said control network nodes; and

a supervisory network, said supervisory network comprising ~~at least one multi-master data~~ a supervisory communication bus and a plurality of supervisory nodes **[[connected]]** communicatively coupled to said ~~at least one multi-master data~~ supervisory communication bus, each of said supervisory nodes **[[connected]]** configured to monitor at least one of **[[said]]** the data buses of said hierarchical control network.

2-39. (Canceled)

40. (New) The matrix control network of claim 1, wherein at least one of the control network nodes communicatively coupled to a given data bus is configured to operate as a master node and the other control network nodes communicatively coupled to that data bus are configured to operate as slave nodes.

41. (New) The matrix control network of claim 40, wherein each of said supervisory nodes comprises a supervisory node slave unit and a supervisory node master unit, said supervisory node slave unit connected to one of said data buses of said hierarchical control network, and said supervisory node master unit connected to said supervisory communication bus.

42. (New) The matrix control network of claim 41, wherein the master node for each data bus systematically polls the slave nodes connected to the data bus.

43. (New) The matrix control network of claim 42, wherein the master node for each data bus polls the supervisory node slave unit of the supervisory node connected to the data bus.

44. (New) The matrix control network of claim 43, wherein the supervisory node slave unit of each supervisory node refrains from transmitting over the data bus to which the supervisory node is connected unless authorized by the master node connected to the data bus.

45. (New) The matrix control network of claim 1, wherein a supervisory node detecting an error or exception condition transmits an alert message over said supervisory communication bus.

46. (New) The matrix control network of claim 45, wherein said alert message is a broadcast to all of the supervisory nodes communicatively coupled to said supervisory communication bus.

47. (New) The matrix control network of claim 45, wherein:
one of said data buses comprises a first-tier data bus;
one of the control network nodes communicatively coupled to said first-tier data bus is configured to operate as a first-tier master node;

at least one of said supervisory nodes is connected to said first-tier data bus, said at least one supervisory node being configured to communicate with said first-tier master node; and

said at least one supervisory node relays information pertaining to said alert message to said first-tier master node.

48. (New) The matrix control network of claim 1, wherein each of said control network nodes comprises a control network node slave unit and control network node master unit.

49. (New) The matrix control network of claim 48, wherein each of said control network nodes comprises a pair of transceivers and a pair of processors, a first one of said pair of transceivers being utilized by said control network node slave unit and a second one of said pair of transceivers being utilized by said control network node master unit, and a first one of said pair of processors being connected to said first one of said pair of transceivers and utilized by said control network node slave unit and a second one of said pair of processors being connected to said second one of said pair of transceivers and utilized by said control network node master unit.

50. (New) The matrix control network of claim 49, wherein:
each of said supervisory nodes comprises a supervisory node slave unit and a supervisory node master unit; and

each of said supervisory nodes comprises a second pair of transceivers and a second pair of processors, a first one of said second pair of transceivers being utilized by said supervisory slave node unit and a second one of said second pair of transceivers being utilized by said supervisory node master unit, and a first one of said second pair of processors being connected to said first one of said second pair of transceivers and utilized by said supervisory node slave unit and a second one of said second pair of processors being connected to said second one of said second pair of transceivers and utilized by said supervisory node master unit.

51. (New) The matrix control network of claim 40, wherein said supervisory nodes communicate over said supervisory communication bus according to a master-slave communication protocol.

52. (New) A method of configuring a control network system, comprising the steps of:

communicatively coupling a plurality of control network nodes and a plurality of data buses in a hierarchical control network structure;

communicatively coupling a plurality of supervisory nodes to a supervisory communication bus;

monitoring communications over said data buses using said supervisory nodes;
and

communicating among said supervisory nodes over said supervisory communication bus according to a master-slave communication protocol.

53. (New) The method of claim 52, wherein said step of communicatively coupling said plurality of control network nodes and said plurality of data buses in said hierarchical control network structure comprises the step of connecting each of said data buses to one or more of said control network nodes, and configuring at least one of the control network nodes attached to a given data bus to operate as a master node and the remainder of the control network nodes attached to the given data bus to operate as slave nodes.

54. (New) The method of claim 53, further comprising the step of, for each supervisory node, connecting a supervisory node slave unit to one of said data buses, wherein the step of communicatively coupling said plurality of supervisory nodes to said supervisory communication bus comprises the step of, for each supervisory node, connecting a supervisory node master unit to said supervisory communication bus.

55. (New) The method of claim 54, further comprising the step of communicating among said control network nodes according to a master-slave communication protocol by systematically polling the slave nodes connected to the data bus from the master node connected to the data bus.

56. (New) The method of claim 55, further comprising the step of polling the supervisory node slave unit connected to the data bus when polling the other slave nodes connected to the data bus.

57. (New) The method of claim 54, further comprising the step of transmitting an alert message over said supervisory communication bus when the supervisory node slave unit detects an error or exception condition on the data bus that it is monitoring.

58. (New) The method of claim 57, wherein said alert message is broadcast to all of said supervisory nodes over the supervisory communication bus.

59. (New) The method of claim 57, further comprising the step of relaying information pertaining to said alert message to a master node connected to a higher-tier data bus relative to the data bus which is being monitored by the supervisory node sending the original alert message.

60. (New) The method of claim 59, wherein said master node connected to said higher-tier data bus is a first-tier master node.

61. (New) The method of claim 54, wherein each of said control network nodes comprises a control network node slave unit and control network node master unit.

62. (New) The method of claim 61, wherein each of said control network nodes comprises a pair of transceivers and a pair of processors, a first one of said pair of transceivers being utilized by said control network node slave unit and a second one of said pair of transceivers being utilized by said control network node master unit, and a first one of said pair of processors being connected to said first one of said pair of transceivers and utilized by said control network node slave unit and a second one of said pair of processors being connected to said second one of said pair of transceivers and utilized by said control network node master unit.

63. (New) The method of claim 62, wherein each of said supervisory nodes comprises a second pair of transceivers and a second pair of processors, a first one of said second pair of transceivers being utilized by said supervisory slave node unit and a second one of said second pair of transceivers being utilized by said supervisory node master unit, and a first one of said second pair of processors being connected to said first one of said second pair of transceivers and utilized by said supervisory node slave unit and a second one of said second pair of processors being connected to said second one of said second pair of transceivers and utilized by said supervisory node master unit.

64. (New) A control network system, comprising:
a plurality of control network data buses;
a plurality of control network nodes connected to said control network data buses, each of said control network data buses communicatively coupled to one or more of said control network nodes;
a supervisory bus; and
a plurality of supervisory nodes connected to said supervisory bus, said plurality of supervisory nodes configured to monitor said control network data buses.

65. (New) The control network system of claim 64, wherein each of said control network nodes comprises (i) an uplink transceiver, and (ii) a downlink transceiver that communicates over a different data bus than said uplink transceiver.

66. (New) The control network system of claim 64, wherein at least one of the control network nodes connected to a given data bus is configured to operate as a master node, and the remainder of the control network nodes connected to the data bus are configured to operate as slave nodes.

67. (New) The control network system of claim 66, wherein each of said supervisory nodes is configured as a slave node with respect to the data bus which it monitors.

68. (New) The control network system of claim 67, wherein the master node for each data bus systematically polls each of the slave nodes as well as the supervisory node that monitors the data bus.

69. (New) The control network system of claim 67, wherein a supervisory node detecting an error or exception condition on the bus it is monitoring transmits an error message over said supervisory bus.

70. (New) The control network system of claim 69, wherein said error message comprises a broadcast message intended for reception by each of said supervisory nodes.

71. (New) The control network of claim 66, wherein the supervisory node takes over for the master node on the data bus which the supervisory node is monitoring upon detecting a failure of the master node.

72. (New) A control network system, comprising:

a plurality of nodes;

a plurality of control network data buses connected to distinct sets of said nodes and arranged in a hierarchical structure, said plurality of control network data buses comprising a first-tier control network data bus and a plurality of lower-tier data buses, each distinct set of nodes comprising a master node and one or more slave nodes;

a supervisory bus; and

a plurality of supervisory nodes connected to said supervisory bus, each of said supervisory nodes configured to monitor one of said lower-tier buses.

73. (New) The control network of claim 72, wherein each of said supervisory nodes comprises a first transceiver connected to one of said lower-tier data buses, and a second transceiver connected to said multi-master supervisory data bus.

74. (New) The control network of claim 72, whereby communications on said lower-tier buses monitored by said supervisory nodes are made accessible to the first-tier master node.

75. (New) A control network, comprising:

a plurality of first-tier slave nodes;

a first common bus connecting said first-tier slave nodes in a loop configuration;

a second common bus connecting a plurality of second-tier slave nodes in a loop configuration, said second common bus further connected to at least one of said first-tier slave nodes functioning as a second-tier master node with respect to the second common bus; and

a first-tier master node connected to said first common bus, said first-tier master node comprising an uplink transceiver connected to said second common bus and a downlink transceiver connected to said first common bus.